ANNEX 2

EXTRACT OF UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDANCE ON LESS-LETHAL WEAPONS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT – USE OF CHEMICAL IRRITANTS

Circumstances of Potentially Lawful Use

- A chemical irritant should be used only where sufficient toxicological information is available to confirm that it will not cause any unwarranted health problems and when its delivery against a target is accurate. Chemical irritants should only be deployed where a law enforcement official has reason to believe there is an imminent threat of injury.[74]

Specific Risks

- When Chemical irritants are used appropriately, their effects are normally transient, lasting up to approximately three hours. Exposure to fresh air and treating the eyes with cool water typically remedies the effects within one or two hours. Some people, however, have exceptionally severe reactions to irritant spray. Restraining a suspect by placing them in the prone position (i.e. where the person is lying flat with the chest down and back up) should be avoided after exposure. If an individual suffering from the effects of a chemical irritant is restrained, his or her breathing shall be monitored constantly. Any unexpected or long-lasting effects should be referred for relevant specialist assessment and treatment.[75]

- The use of chemical irritants can temporarily cause breathing difficulties; nausea; vomiting; irritation of the respiratory tract, tear ducts, and eyes; spasms; chest pains; dermatitis or allergies. In large doses, it can cause necrosis of the tissue in the respiratory tract and the digestive system, pulmonary oedema, and internal bleeding. There is also the possibility of burns or other injury resulting directly from the solvents if they have not evaporated before contact with skin. There is a specific risk of flammability from the solvent, for instance if a subject is smoking.[76]

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74 Office of the High Commissioner, United Nations Human Rights (2020) Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement. Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/LLW_Guidance.pdf

75 Ibid, at paragraph 7.2.4

76 Ibid, at paragraph 7.2.5